FOREWORD

In preparing this brochure I have leaned heavily for factual material on a book written by the Reverend George Hunter McNeur of the New Zealand Presbyterian Mission in Canton, entitled "Liang Ah Fa". Mr. McNeur had access to the files of the London Mission Society, where some of Leung's letters were kept as well as letters referring to him, especially those from Dr. Robert Morrison and Dr. Wm. Milne. Mr. McNeur used the Mandarin spelling of the name, I prefer to use the Cantonese pronunciation. Mr. Leung was a Cantonese. In his day not many Cantonese were familiar with the Mandarin. Other sources of information were gathered from "A Short History of the Chinese People" by L. Carrington Goodrich, and, of course, Dr. Kenneth Scott Latourette's writings, particularly the volume. . ."The Chinese, Their History and Culture". During my forty-five years in China I have seen the village and city life of the Chinese and have been associated with and worked with men who, like Leung Ah Faat, were missionaries to their own people.

Rev. A. J. Fisher 02

LEUNG AH FAAT, HERO OF CHRISTIAN FAITH
First Ordained Minister of the Protestant Church in China

A young man, intently engaged in cutting wood blocks for a small book he himself had written, was suddenly interrupted by police entering his shop, saying, "We are looking for Leung Ah Faat." Mr. Leung, laying aside his tools, said, "I am Leung Ah Faat. Why do you come here?" The reply was, "You are arrested. Come along just as you are to the magistrate."

He was informed that the accusation against him was the printing and circulation of books prohibited to be circulated and for having gone to a foreign country contrary to the laws of the Imperial Government of China. Leung tried to make it clear that what he was doing was for the good of their people and his only purpose was to enlighten them with the truth that he had found.

The magistrate shut him up at once and said: "Your books with their strange doctrine are nonsense and trash and are not in accord with the teachings of our Sages which have stood the test of the ages. What better can you bring in from any barbarian country? I accuse you of propagating false doctrine and for having gone abroad. Flog him and confine him to prison." He was unmercifully beaten and thrown into prison. Though he might have received the death sentence by being beheaded, he was later freed with a heavy fine.

Leung Ah Faat was learning the hard way that being a Christian is not riding on flowery beds of ease. The Kingdom of Heaven is entered by a rugged and narrow way. Leung's life was spared. God's purpose for Leung Ah Faat could not be thwarted.

China of the Nineteenth Century

Since the early part of the nineteenth century, Chinese officialdom was impervious to any intercourse with the western world. There was a law on the statute books, as quoted by the Rev. George H. McNeur, which read, "All officers and private citizens who clandestinely proceed to sea for trade or remove to foreign islands for the purposes of inhabiting the same, shall be punished according to the law against communicating with rebels and enemies and consequently suffer death by being beheaded." All foreigners were considered to be enemies of the State. Chinese officials were insufferably proud and refused all intercourse on the basis of equality. It should be borne in mind, in at least partial extenuation of this attitude, that for more than one hundred years, the buccaneering ways of western nations had not been such that they should greatly desire intercourse with them. In the sixteenth century, the Spanish, Portuguese and the Dutch had in succession occupied Formosa. Amoy and Foochow had been invaded at various times. The Portuguese had taken possession of a small island, Macau, in 1557--the oldest European outpost in the China trade, at the mouth of the Pearl River, some seventy-five miles from Canton. Such ruthless disregard for their sovereignty was not conducive to friendly intercourse.

Yet foreigners insisted on trading with China. The west wanted silk, porcelain, chinaware, tea, bamboo, jade and other precious stones. The westerners were reluctantly allowed, by special decree of the Viceroy of Kwang Tung Province, to live in Canton in a marked-off area near the river's edge outside the walled city. The Chinese called

it the "Thirteen Hong"--there being thirteen companies or agencies. The foreigners called it the "factory". Here they were confined for business, residence, and godown (warehouse) space. Once a week they were allowed to go short distances for a walk under escort of Chinese soldiers. All business and intercourse or negotiations with the Chinese officials had to be done through compradores or middle men. Foreigners were forbidden to enter the walled city.

Stories are told of compradores who, upon being shown an invention from the west, would reply with an attempt to save face, "Inside city, have plenty." It was an age of Chinese exclusiveness and western insistence on penetrating the fantastic Kingdom of Cathay so shrouded in mystery.

Robert Morrison, First Protestant Missionary to China

In the year 1782, January 5, to be exact, a son was born to a Scotch family residing in Morpath, England, and they called his name "Robert". The father was a shoe-last maker. Religion was a major factor in the life of the Morrison family. At the age of 16, Robert joined the Presbyterian Church in Morpath, the church of his parents.

He had been apprenticed to his father's trade but Robert had ambitions of being more than a maker of shoe-lasts. As his religious convictions deepened, he felt a call to serve Christ and his Kingdom. Through careful planning and arduous labors, and, no doubt, much sacrifice on the part of his family, he obtained a university education. The London Missionary Society had been organized in 1794--a missionary society to which all protestant churches were to contribute on the basis of the simple love for Christ and enthusiasm for his Kingdom--to go into all the world and preach the gospel. This appealed to Robert. He applied, was accepted, and sent to China with the object of opening a mission there. This was considered the most difficult field to enter which was what he had asked for. He prepared himself by studying the language with a Chinese residing in London. They, together, made a copy of parts of a Bible in Chinese which had been sent to the British Museum by one of the merchant princes of the East India Company from Canton, China. This translation of the Bible had apparently been made by the Roman Catholic Fathers who had earlier been in China.

A Mission Is Launched

The year 1807 is a memorable year in the history of Christian missions in China. It was the year when an entering wedge was made that eventually was to break the rock of exclusiveness that was China. It was a "wedge", I say. There was to be much suffering, agonizing hardship and frustration before it would really break.

Not being able to secure passage on an East India Company's boat going to China, Robert Morrison went to New York where a Presbyterian elder and owner of a clipper boat, plying between New York and Canton, offered him passage. It was a long and arduous journey. He arrived in September, 1807. Lodging was first found with an American merchant on behest of U. S. Secretary of State, James Madison, under Benjamin Harrison's administration. As a missionary he was not permitted by Chinese law to stay in Canton, but finding him useful as an interpreter and translator, the British East India Company offered him a position as an employee in the "factory". It was also decreed that any Chinese teaching the language to a foreigner would be severely punished. In spite of this, Morrison did learn Chinese and he did get help in translating the Scriptures which was his burning desire.

In spite of all efforts to keep out western culture and ideas, the Orient was beginning to be revolutionized, just as sooner or later, the east would cause changes in the western culture and ideas. The western nations had begun a race for expansion of trade in Africa, Asia and the islands of the Pacific. The west was being revolutionized through contacts with the Orient, and the revolutionized west was revolutionizing, albeit unconsciously, the Orient.

The London Missionary Society in Great Britain and the American Board of Commissions for Foreign Missions in the U.S.A. were just beginning an unprecedented movement that initiated a period of missionary effort in which the Christian church concerned itself with preaching the Gospel with a fervor never known since the very early days of the church's history. It was as if for the first time they really heard the command: "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel." Personal evangelism was the only method that could be employed. There was no opportunity to preach the Gospel to the masses. It was necessarily from a purely religious motive that those accepting it came, rather than through mass movements or through compulsion by rulers. Of course, one cannot claim that all converts entered the church from absolutely pure motives. Human beings are frail; motives are hard to judge.

Village of Leung Ah Faat

The West River of Kwong Tung is a mighty stream that has its source in the Yunan Province and cuts through Kwang Si and Kwong Tung Provinces and, joined by its tributaries, makes the great delta region of which Canton City is the head. It is navigable to boats of considerable depth and size for hundreds of miles through the interior. It is at once the benefactor and the terror of the regions through which it passes. It may become, during flood seasons, a raging torrent, flooding cities and towns along its course and inundating rice fields. Twenty centuries of farmers have tried to control the stream by building dikes. During the flood season, the river level is often higher than the rice paddy fields along its course on either side. Around the village of Loh Tsuen, the fields are low so that often they never get really dry and have to be cultivated under water. The dikes are so constructed that if one should break, it would not necessarily flood all the fields. At best, living under these conditions is always precarious.

The Leung Clan lived in the west part of the village which contained several other clans. The village is located on higher ground; about fifty feet above the flood level. It is crowned by a big banyan tree. Here it was that in the 43rd year of the Emperor Kien Lung of the Ching dynasty (Western reckoning, A.D. 1789), a son was born to an obscure family of the Leung Clan. They called his name "Ah Faat", meaning "sent". The "Ah" is added for the sake of euphony. Little did they know how appropriate this name was to be.

Boyhood Days of Ah Faat

We have meager records of Ah Faat's boyhood days. However, the writer, having seen a great deal of village life in China, can assure the reader that Ah Faat as a male heir, to carry on the name of the family, would be well cared for, yea, even pampered; the way of most male children. He would be given preferential treatment over that of any female children. His father, we know, was an ardent idol worshipper and imbued with Buddhist superstition. Ah Faat would be taken to the temple on feast days where candles would be lit on the altar for good luck; daily there would be candles lit at the little altar on one side of the front door dedicated to heaven and earth spirits. There would also be a kitchen god to bring good luck for the meals to be cooked and eaten.

As soon as he was able to walk, Ah Faat would go out to the hills, with his father where his ancestors were buried. At the Spring festival, they would visit the graves which probably had been trampled on by buffalos, that often would be grazing around--necessary repairs would be made to show that the dead has not been forgotten and a sacrificial meal presented on a tray to the spirits of the dead who, on occasion, are supposed to visit the grave. Ah Faat apparently observed all these things without much questioning. It was the custom. Everybody did it that way.

At about 6 years of age, his father would take him some fine day early in the morning to a private school teacher. (All schools were private in those days and education of the children depended on the initiative of the parents.) Ah Faat had a good father, he was

concerned to have him learn to read and write. A bargain would be made with the teacher in terms of so many catties of rice in lieu of tuition. Every morning he would be awakened early; have his face washed, eat a bowl of congee and be sent off to the temple where the school was conducted. On entering the classroom, he must first make his bow to the teacher (the teacher must always be respected). As soon as he was seated at his personal desk, made for him by his father, he would begin in a loud voice to recite his lesson of yesterday. In rotation, he would be called to the teacher's desk to say his lesson and then given another section to learn. It would be interspersed with writing, done at first by laying a sheet of written characters under thin paper and copying the same with a brush pen. Later, he would practise free-hand writing.

What was he studying? He would begin with the simple 3-character classic. Then on to the 4-character classic; and if he kept on going to school, he would take up the 5-character classic of the Ming dynasty. These were the basic books for every child that went to school. All learning was cast in the same mold. Advanced students would go on to study the writings of Confucius and his disciple, Menscius, and the moral essays of Laotse, the Tao Teh Ching. These classics were excellent in their teaching. As far as Chinese education was concerned, they contained all that was necessary to know and no one could teach them anything other that was worthwhile. These books of higher learning were not for Ah Faat as yet. His family was not affluent. It was necessary for him to help support the family or at least be independent and earn his own living. Neither the village nor the nearby market town of Sam Chow could absorb more workers. The region was far from being self-supporting.

Leung Leaves Home--Becomes a Printer

At 15 years of age we find Ah Faat venturing forth from home. Being near the river he would often watch the big passage boats, with their sails unfurled, sailing down the river and would wonder where in the wide wide world they would take him. Early one morning he went to the wharf with his father to wait for the passage boat to come down the river. On arrival, with many others, Ah Faat scrambled on board and then scrambled for a place on deck to spread his mat, where he would sit or lie for the twenty-four hour journey to Canton, leaving his father to go back home.

A story that has become folklore is told about a man getting onto a passage boat, trying to edge his way in between other passengers. When asked what he had in the bag he was carrying, he used a pun on words. He said, "kwai kwat"--"devil's bones", which also is the sound of the words meaning "deceitfully clever". The passengers, having nothing else to do and ready for any kind of diversion on their arduous journey, asked him to let them see the bones of the devil. "I will do that with great pleasure, but I must first have room to spread them out." Those near him made room for him to spread his mat, then he said, "I have had a very long journey on foot. Let me first rest a bit." He laid himself down, but before going to sleep, he said, "I was only kwai kwat" (very clever).

This country boy of 17 would be quite bewildered with the bustle and noise of a big city. Cantonese are active, alert and industrious. People from all over the province came to trade in Canton. He would have difficulty in understanding some of the dialects spoken.

The different trades have a way of establishing themselves in one street. You will find a street in Canton called "Shoe Street", another "Cloth Street", another "Sandalwood Street", etc.

Leung Ah Faat belonged to a very large clan. All with the surname of Leung claimed relationship, no matter where they came from. Most any large city would have an ancestral hall where anyone, who could identify himself as a "Leung", could find aid and shelter. Clannishness is a Cantonese characteristic.

Then there were also the various Hongs (trade unions). Some relatives of Leung's belonged to the brush pen makers and that is where he found his first job. But very soon he graduates from this to become a printer by the cutting of wood blocks for the printing of books. This gave him an opportunity to improve his reading and writing. He became an expert at his trade.

It was now the fall of the year 1810. Robert Morrison, since his arrival in Canton in September of 1807, had, through prodigious labor in translation of the Scriptures, come to the point where he was ready to have them printed.

Dr. Morrison's pundit knew of Leung Ah Faat's work as a woodblock cutter and printer of books. He brought him to Morrison, who finding him an affable young man, engaged him at once. How providential! Morrison needed a printer and here was Ah Faat ready and trained for the job. No doubt he would demand high wages. It was a dangerous undertaking. Ah Faat was running a great personal risk. He was producing something forbidden by Imperial decree. Perhaps they figured that they could get away with it by saying, if called on for an explanation, as the director

of the factory put it: "This volume we deem the best of books. Mr. Morrison happens to be able and willing to render it into your language in order that it may be legible to you. Your approval or disapproval of its rests entirely with yourselves. We conceive he has done a good work." It must have been an exciting moment for Morrison to see the beginning of a dream come true, seeing the Holy Bible in Chinese print.

The Rev. and Mrs. Milne

Here we must introduce the ones who were instrumental in changing the course of Leung's life. The Rev. and Mrs. William Milne of Scotland were sent by the London Missionary Society to join Dr. Morrison in his work. They landed in Macau but did not find a welcome. The Portuguese authorities gave them eighteen days to leave. Mr. Milne was smuggled into the factory in Canton to join Dr. Morrison who was in the employ of the East India Company. Mrs. Milne may have been able to stay in Macau as no women were allowed in the factory in Canton.

Mr. Milne clandestinely began to study Chinese in which he made fantastic progress. There was a ban forbidding any Chinese to teach the language to a foreigner. It is reported that his teacher kept poison at hand so that if he was apprehended he would not suffer the indignity of being beheaded.

After serious consideration, Dr. Morrison and Dr. Milne reluctantly came to the conclusion that the time was not ripe for the opening of mission work in China. Where then should they go? There were a number of cities, outside China proper, where the Chinese had migrated. Mr. Milne was sent to explore the possibility of operating from one of these places. The choice fell on Malacca, in the strait between the island of Sumatra and the Malay peninsula. It was a regular port of call of the trading boats and had a Chinese settlement. Mr. Leung Ah Faat was engaged to go along with them. The object was to get the Bible printed and circulated among the Chinese people and this was the place chosen from which to operate. A printing shop was established. This, interestingly, became the forerunner of the well known Presbyterian Mission Press and its successor, the Commercial Press in Shanghai of later days.

Leung Ah Faat Becomes a Christian

Leung had been working with Morrison in the preparation of the Scriptures and religious tracts for some years, but he seemed to have had small regard for the meaning of what he had prepared. Now that he was away from his old surroundings where as he himself says, "My time was often spent in drinking and gambling," he was persuaded to join others in the employ of Dr. Milne to listen to the explanation of the Scriptures which he himself had prepared.

Let us read Ah Faat's own account of his experience:

> "Before I believed in the Saviour, though I knew myself to be a sinner, I did not know how to obtain pardon. I used to go each new and full moon to the temple and prayed to the gods to protect me, but though I worshipped with my body, my heart still cherished evil thoughts and desires, together with designs of cheating and lying which never departed from my mind. After a time I was brought to Malacca in the family of a missionary, who preached to his domestics the doctrine of salvation through Jesus. I attended his ministrations, but my heart was not interested. Sometimes I looked at the Scriptures and heard them explained, but I did not fully comprehend their meaning. Hearing the missionary exhort men not to go and worship the gods, I used to say this is a strange kind of doctrine. According to this, gilt paper, our sacrificial candles, gold flowers and paper money, must be useless and sinful. I fear that Buddha will soon bring punishment and death on such an opponent of the gods and then we shall see what will happen to his doctrines."

This letter records carefully some of the steps of Leung's conversion to Christianity. Leung's request for baptism, however, was not immediately complied with by Dr. Milne. Before he was ready to baptize him, he must be sure that he understood the step that he was about to take. The following questions were submitted to him:

Question: Have you turned from idols to serve the living and true God, the Creator of heaven and earth?

Leung answers: This is my heart's desire.

Question: Do you know and feel that you are a sinful creature and unable to save yourself?

Answer: I know it.

Question: Do you really believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and Saviour of the world, and do you trust in him alone for salvation?

Answer: This is my heart's desire.

Question: Do you expect any wordly advantage, profit, or gain by your becoming a Christian?

Answer: None. I receive baptism because it is my duty.

Question: Do you resolve from this day until the day of your death to live in obedience to all the commandments and ordinances of God and in justice and righteousness before men?

Answer: This is my determination but I fear my strength is not equal to it.

Having answered these questions satisfactorily, Leung Ah Faat was baptized into the faith, the first fruits of Dr. Milne in his mission at Malacca. What a joy it must have been for Dr. and Mrs. Milne to receive this man into the fellowship of their little Christian group.

Leung Ah Faat has often been spoken of as the first Chinese to be baptized. That is not quite correct. Tse Ah Ko was the first. To quote Dr. Morrison: "At a spring of water issuing from the foot of a lofty hill (in Macau) by the seaside, away from human observation, I baptized Tse Ah Ko." He adds this prayer, "May he be the FIRST FRUITS of a great harvest." The date was July 16, 1814. The "spring" is gushing to this day and flows into the ocean. One of the protestant churches in Macau is dedicated to the memory of the first of Dr. Morrison's converts to be baptized.

Leung Ah Faat--A Missionary to His Own People

Ah Faat, having been received into Christian fellowship now enthusiastically enters into every phase of the mission work. He was convinced that literature, along with the wide circulation of the Holy Bible, was one of the best means of evangelizing his country. He was eager that his country should share the benefits of Christianity. He learned what it had done for other people. He coveted the same for his own country. For three years he continued his work in Malacca and at the same time continued to study the Scriptures under Dr. Milne.

High on the list of mission objectives was an educational institution. Robert Morrison once wrote, "I wish we had an institution in Malacca for the training of missionaries, European and native, designed for all the countries beyond the Ganges and also let there be that powerful engine, the press. The first triumphs of the Gospel are, I think, by means of native missionaries and the Bible." Leung became one of the first students of theology in this institution. A monthly magazine was published to which Leung Ah Faat was a regular contributor.

There was plenty of incentive for Leung to want to make a trip back home. To the Chinese the native village is always a lodestone. Again and again, though they may travel far away from home, they want to go back. But Leung also wanted to get married, and he wanted a wife from among his own kind of people. He, of course, consulted his parents by letter and they, through a go-between, found a bride for him. The wedding was set. Eagerly he returns to his home village. It did not take long for him to realize that he was a changed man and did not fit into the pattern

of things in his village. He at once ran headlong into difficulties. He was a Christian now and, of course, as such he wanted a Christian wedding. But how could he withstand his own family, his own clan, and the family of his bride? They would never stand for a Christian wedding. Of course the right day must be chosen by divination. The gods or idols must be propitiated. Obeisance to the ancestral tablets was a traditional must. He soon saw that he could not stand alone against both his own family and that of his bride's. Changes would have to be made gradually. He was learning the art of patiently biding his time in changing idolatrous customs through instruction in Christian ways of living. We do not know precisely what Leung did or what may have been done to him by way of forcing him to comply to custom at the wedding. Time honored customs die hard, especially when they are connected with superstition and religious practices.

It now becomes very evident to Ah Faat that his becoming a Christian must be made clear. A break must be made with the past. He cannot go on under false pretenses. Although Leung is not a scholar (the writing of Chinese in the classical and traditionally acceptable style is an art that few master), but he had, through his craft in printing and earnest study, learned enough to express himself clearly. His first literary effort is a tract entitled, "A Brief Explanatory Abstract of World Salvation". Before he printed this tract, however, he submitted it to Dr. Morrison and Dr. Milne who heartily approved of it.

Once more we find Ah Faat in Canton working with Morrison. While he was busily engaged in preparing the wood blocks for printing of his tract, he was suddenly arrested, arraigned before the magistrate,

accused of propagating proscribed religious ideas. Although Ah Faat tries to explain to the magistrate that there is no evil intent in what he was doing, on the contrary, that it was for the greatest good of their people, he was shut up, saying, "Your ideas are trash and nonsense. Can barbarians teach us anything worthwhile. Flog him, cast him in prison, and see that his printing blocks are destroyed." He was unmercifully flogged and jailed. Even the clothes on his back were taken from him. Of course, he might have been beheaded, but for some reason his life was saved.

He was released with a heavy fine and banishment from Canton. So he went to his own home village again where he had hoped to build a new house for his bride. This had to be postponed because of the heavy fine that was imposed on him which took all his available resources. Far from being deterred by his imprisonment and heavy loss, he was determined by all means that his country should have the Christian's Holy Word in their own language and that he himself must be better prepared to explain it to them. He could not go back to Canton because the order of banishment was still effective. He returned to Malacca to work and study with Dr. Milne.

After a year's labor, the printing of the entire Bible was completed. Ah Faat now felt that it was his task to give it to his own people. This, together with another powerful incentive, made him return to his home in China, namely, that he had a son born to him. Like any good father, he longs to have his son brought up in the nurture of a Christian home, the kind of home he had observed the Milnes had. Once more he was at home trying to explain his Christian faith to his

own people and especially to his own father and other relatives. His father, though tolerant, was obstinate about changing his ways. His wife, however, after long ardent and patient teaching, decided to join Ah Faat in his Christian faith. She did away with her idols--the first woman in China to become a Christian of the protestant faith. The taunts and the sneers and the snubs she must have suffered from her neighbors can be easily imagined.

Now the problem of her baptism became their concern. Should he risk the long journey to Canton with a young child and ask Dr. Morrison to baptize her? He finally decides to baptize her himself. It must have been a ceremony that had deep meaning for man and wife. He records in a letter some years later, recalling the act, "From that hour we have been of one mind and heart in serving the only true and living God."

Once more Leung Ah Faat went to Malacca to continue his studies and printing tracts and more Bibles to be distributed. He soon discovered that his teacher, who had taught him so much by word and example in living a Christian life, was far from well. Dr. Milne had tuberculosis. In those days there was no cure for it. Dr. Milne died at the youthful age of thirty-seven.

With the Holy Bible, both Old and New Testament, completed Leung felt that it was his task to get it to his people. The driving force in his life was to make known to his own people the riches of love in Christ Jesus. He had found it through the study of the Scriptures he had printed and the life and teaching of Dr. and Mrs. Milne.

With the death of his beloved teacher, he saw no reason for staying on in Malacca. The first thing he did after he came home was to bring his son to Dr. Morrison in Canton to be baptized. The ban on his returning to Canton had apparently been forgotten. We find this entry in Dr. Morrison's journal, "Today Leung Ah Faat, our Chinese fellow disciple, brought his son, Leung Tsun Tak, and had him baptized." He adds this prayer, "Oh that this small Christian family may be the means for spreading the truth."

After fourteen years of labor as interpreter for the East India Company, the translation of the Bible, and the study of things Chinese, Dr. Morrison felt that he should go home for a change and rest and also to give an account of his work to the Board that had sent him out, and furthermore to appeal to the home church for reinforcements and further aid for his mission. But how could he leave his little flock without a shepherd? Leung Ah Faat had for some years been a faithful follower of Christianity. He had been tested and remained true to his convictions, so, "to insure the continuance of Christian ordinances among the few who had renounced idolatry," Dr. Morrison, as Leung wrote later, "laid hands on me and ordained me to publish to men everywhere the true Gospel."

Dr. Morrison, after an absence of fourteen years from his beloved Scotland, goes home. Leung is left in charge of the mission. For three years he carried on alone. How well he had done can be learned from a letter which Dr. Morrison, after his return, sent to his Board in London:

> "In a land like this full of idols and idolators where persecution is carried on from the throne to the cottage

against the disciples of Jesus, we must not be surprised if many resemble Nicodemus, or what the church historian, Milner, has called 'pagan Christianity', that is, Christians of imperfect knowledge and a timid or rather concealed profession. However, there is one, whatever the opinion of my brethren may be, who is a decided Christian and who makes an open confession of his faith. It is Leung Ah Faat. Indeed, I apprehend that his zeal may exceed his prudence."

We find a letter on the files of the London Missionary Society written by Leung himself, expressive of his deep faith.

"All of us who sincerely believe in our Lord Jesus, although dwelling in different places and not having hitherto seen or known each other, still possess a heart as if we had seen and known each other, for our principles are one, our hearts are one, and our thoughts and hopes are one. Therefore, I, Leung Ah Faat, unite with the venerable teachers and all those who believe in our Lord, Jesus Christ, although hitherto we have never seen nor known each other, still there and here our hearts are the same.

"Thinking thus, I send a letter of salutation to all in the noble English nation who sincerely believe in our Lord Jesus, both teachers and people, 'Peace be with you, peace be with you.'

"Now, when God, the Most High Ruler wills to convert an individual, to convert a family, or to convert a nation, He, by His own inscrutable purposes, causes men to go

forth and preach the Gospel to them and causes men to believe and obey it. Hence I, Leung Ah Faat, obtained a knowledge of the Gospel's true principles, believing and obeying our Lord Jesus Christ, along with my whole family. This was from God, the Most High Ruler's self-induced purpose in causing the venerable teachers, Morrison and Milne, to come to China to promulgate and explain the true principles of the Gospel, and so inducing me, Leung Ah Faat, to hear and to believe and to obey them. As in all nations of the world, there are many doctrines, but none can be compared with the principles of the Gospel. I do not now desire to bustle and strive for the things of life, but I voluntarily desire to be a learner at the missionary's door, to learn clearly true principles and to promulgate them in my native country. Thus these may cause men to know the Gospel, to believe and obey it, and so I should hope to convert my Chinese countrymen that they may cast away their molten images and honor and reverence the Lord of earth and all things as God.

"Therefore, I earnestly beseech all the venerable teachers and sincere believers in our Lord--those who have virtuous power to employ their virtuous power, those who have talents to employ their talents, and put forth excessively the energies of a heart of benevolence and love to scatter widely the true principles of the Gospel among all nations so that men may be converted. Thus we will not criminally turn our

backs on the grace of the Most High Lord manifested in the work of human redemption, but contrarywise, we may perform our duty to the utmost so that in the coming life we may hope our Lord will graciously confer on us the gift of everlasting blessedness in heaven where we shall enjoy repose and delight.

"I desire that the peace of our Lord Jesus Christ may be with you to all eternity."

I have quoted this letter at length to show how Leung Ah Faat has progressed in his Christian life and how in a short time he seemed to have become a mature Christian and an ardent evangelist. Leung Ah Faat was always thinking of ways and means to get the Gospel to the people.

Leung Ah Faat, together with a Mr. Koo Tin Ching, a convert from his own village, opened a school for boys in Loh Tsuen. This was the first of its kind, and it started something in mission work that has been copied ever since Leung's day. Schools became a significant feature of all missionary work in China as elsewhere, and they had a tremendous influence on China's future, the indirect cause of revolutions and social convulsions. New wine bursting old bottles.

This particular school, however, did not last very long on account of opposition raised by the villagers. The teachers ~~did~~ forsook the use of the traditional text books that were used in the old schools, and they also taught the boys that idolatry was useless and many of their superstitious ideas were false. So strong was the opposition that both Leung and Koo had to flee for their lives.

Leung went first to Macau where he found Dr. Morrison. He busied himself there with Bible study under Dr. Morrison; and since the

people would not let him teach or listen to him preach, he tried to reach them through literature. While teaching the boys, the idea of writing a small catechism came to him. He also wrote a tract that dealt with objections by some of the listeners to his preaching. One question, which must have cut him deeply, was, "Since you say God is all-powerful, why does he not convert the Emperor and so compel all to believe, instead of using such a vile fellow as you?" In writing tracts, it was of inestimable value to have a Chinese viewpoint, one who understood his own people and who was imbued with the love of Christ to answer questions of this nature.

It was a source of great joy to Leung Ah Faat to have another missionary come to China in the person of the Reverend E. C. Bridgman. Though not of the same Board or mission, he was welcomed by Dr. Morrison. When Dr. Morrison introduced Leung Ah Faat, together with another missionary, a Mr. David Abeel, who had come to be a chaplain for the foreign community, and they had prayed together, Mr. Abeel remarked that the "image of the Saviour appeared in his (Leung's) face."

The coming of reinforcements was a stimulus to Ah Faat. He now prepared to make another journey into the interior. With financial aid from the mission, together with a new convert, a Mr. Wat Ah Kong, they went to Loh Tsuen, to prepare for their journey. (The persecution in Leung's village had apparently been forgotten.) Shortly thereafter, with a newly printed supply of Bibles and tracts, they started overland from Canton, visiting markets and villages, talking to people as they journed some 400 miles, to Ko Chow, a district noted for its comparatively large number of literati. Leung's conviction was that the literati must

first be converted to the truth, then it would be easier to reach the masses.

Ko Chow City was holding its examination for literary degrees. The Chancellor of Education was a relative of Ah Kong's. He gave the two itinerating Christians permission to stand at the gate as the aspirants for the literati degree came out of their stalls, in which they had been locked for three days while writing their essays. They presented each one with a Bible and some tracts. Leung and Ah Kong felt very much encouraged with their success; so much so that they at once prepared another batch to be distributed, this time at the provincial examination in Canton City itself.

The examination for the much coveted literary degree, which, if successful, admitted them to become officials of the state, was about to take place in Canton. The examination hall consisted of over 10,000 stalls where the aspirants for the degree were locked in, so they could not communicate with one another for three days, to write their essays. What a wonderful opportunity, thought Leung, to get the word of truth to them as they come out very early in the morning! Mr. Leung had prepared for this and engaged several helpers to stand at the gate with him. They gave each one as they came out a Bible and a Christian tract. It was a risky business, but Leung was in the habit of taking risks for the Gospel's sake.

For three days they were undisturbed. On the fourth day, while busily engaged in the passing out of their literature, the police, having been appraised of what was going on, suddenly appeared. Leung and his associates were arrested. Leung was able to break away from his

captors and escaped, first to his own home on Honan Island across the river from the city, and later, to his home village in the country. This did not offer him protection for one of his helpers, under torture by police in Canton, was forced to tell what he knew about Leung; what he was doing, where he lived, etc. Learning that he had been betrayed, Leung took his family and fled to another district where he was not known.

His helpers were released with a heavy fine of eight hundred dollars. This was paid by Leung's friends. However, the authorities still wanted the chief perpetrator, Mr. Leung, himself. It apparently was considered to be of such importance to find him that they dispatched two military boats to go up the West River to his home village with orders to arrest him and bring him back for trial which would possibly have meant execution. Not being able to find him, they took it out on his home village. After ransacking his home, destroying all his books and tracts, they took chickens and pigs from the villagers for the soldiers to feast on.

Leung, in the meantime, with his family had escaped to Kong Moon on the West River and, eventually, to Chek Hom, further up the river where he found lodging for the time being. When his funds for subsistence ran out, his wife braved the danger of going to Canton, where in the crowd going and coming she was unnoticed, to find Dr. Bridgeman who was at the time in charge of the Mission. She found on arrival that Dr. Bridgeman had gone to Macau. Learning this, Leung took his son and went to Macau where with the aid of Dr. Bridgeman, he was taken on one of the British boats to Singapore. There is a record of his personal reaction to the situation in which he found himself at this time.

Here is the record as translated by Bridgeman and John Morrison:

> "Thus situated I called to mind that all those who preach the Gospel of our Lord and Saviour must suffer persecution. I therefore meditated on Romans 8:31-39 and other similar passages, and tho I cannot equal the patience of our Saviour or of Paul or Job in enduring suffering, yet I desire to imitate the Saints of ancient times and keep my heart in peace. Though I suffer severe persecution my heart finds some rest and joy, and my only fear is lest the Chinese officers should injure my wife and daughter. I therefore morning and evening beseech God mercifully to protect and save them."

This letter was sent to the Mission by John Morrison, together with an explanation of the reason for Leung having to leave China for a time.

Leung could not be kept quiet. He must be active about the King's business. If he could not preach to his people in China, he would preach to those of his people who had gone abroad. There were a number of places in the Malay region where the Chinese had gone for business or as laborers. Among the chief places were Singapore and Malacca. He was soon joined by Kew Ah Kong, the reformed gambler, turned into an ardent worker for Christ. For four years they conducted very successful mission work in Singapore and Malacca. In the report of their work there is a record of the year 1837 when twenty persons were baptized.

Nothing could keep this ardent Christian and patriotic Chinese out of China proper for long. Had he not been ordained for this purpose? The little group of Christians that had been gathered in Canton were as sheep without a shepherd. With Leung exiled, and all who had dealings with him held under suspicion, there was small chance of their survival in Canton. Once again Leung went back to Canton. What a discouraging situation he found! The little flock of Christians scattered and, worse still, the relationship between China and Great Britain was strained to the extent that war seemed inevitable. Leung was Chinese, his becoming a Christian had not denationalized him. He had such a close relationship with the British that he feared, if hostilities broke out, his people would more than ever be adverse to listening to the preaching of the Gospel since they considered it as emanating from the British. In desperation he boldly risked going into the "factory", in spite of it being considered disloyal for Chinese to have dealings with the British at this time. He felt he must do something to stop war between his friends. He found an old friend, John Morrison, the son of his teacher, who was representing Great Britain as Consul in Canton, only to learn that relationship had deteriorated to the extent that war seemed inevitable. What is known in history books as the "Opium War" was already in progress.

This is not the place to tell of the Opium War--any good history book of China or Great Britain will have record of it. It is mentioned here only insofar as it was connected with Leung Ah Faat and the progress of the Gospel. It was a matter of very deep concern, personally. The Gospel, which meant more than life to him, was imparted to him by Britishers. The support for his work came from the Christians

in Great Britain, yet he was a loyal Chinese and, though he may not have agreed with the policies of her government, he did not want his people to suffer defeat which he, with a wider knowledge than those in authority, knew would be their fate. War ensued. The British won without difficulty and opium remained an item of trade. A treaty known as the "Nanking Treaty" was signed August 29, 1842; it resulted in: 1. A rocky point on the south coast of Kwangtung being ceded to Britain to become the Crown Colony of Hong Kong. 2. The opening of five Treaty Ports where trade could be carried on and foreigners allowed to reside and have free access. 3. Negotiations to be carried on between the two countries with the proper officials on the basis of equality of status. The following year a supplementary treaty was signed by China with other nations extending to them the same privileges on the basis of the "most favored nation" treatment. This opened the way for extraterritorial rights which for seventy-five years was a sore point with the Chinese. As a matter of fact, it cannot be regarded other than an infringement of the prerogatives of a sovereign state.

As a result of these treaties a new era began in China and it brought new opportunities to Leung and his cohorts. The preaching of the Gospel was recognized, however reluctantly, as legal. They could go about freely to teach and preach. Foreign missionaries were permitted to rent or buy property for residence, schools and chapels. Leung had the joy of welcoming the son of his spiritual father, Dr. William Milne, to Canton to again open the work of the London Missionary Society. Representatives of the American Board of Commissioners also came back. The Church Missionary Society of the Church of England and the English Methodists sent their missionaries. There was a wonderful spirit of cooperation among them. As far as it concerned Leung Ah Faat, they were all Christian brethren. Denominationalism was foreign to his mind.

A New Era in Missions in China

With the opening of the Treaty Ports a new era began in China. It gave great impetus to trade with China from all over the world. The few who, in spite of difficulties and danger, had become Christians eagerly welcomed missionaries from abroad. Leung especially was delighted with new workers coming to China. He helped them find suitable teachers for their language study; was active in finding places for them to reside and, in other ways, became the liaison between the missionaries and his people.

Dr. Peter Parker who, before the war had already made a reputation with his Opthalmic Clinic, opened a hospital in the factory which developed into the well known Canton Hospital, the first hospital in the Orient where western methods of treatment for diseases where used under Christian auspices. It was in connection with this hospital that Leung found his greatest opportunity for the preaching of the Truth so dear to him. Before accepting the position as evangelist in this hospital he had made an attempt to open a chapel on the crowded street. He soon discovered, however, that the people were not yet ready for this sort of open preaching of a religion new to them. His chapel was invaded by a mob, furniture destroyed and generally desecrated.

It was in connection with the hospital that Leung found his heart's desire fulfilled. Although there seemed to be very few who actually came for further study and fewer still who came to be taken in among the company of believers, it nevertheless gave opportunity to spread the message far and wide. The hospital was patronized by people coming from

long distances as the news of the wonderful cures performed by western medical skills became known. This was particularly true in Dr. Parker's skill in removing cataracts.

A photograph taken from a portrait of Reverend Leung Ah Faat pictures him as tall, stately, with a long sparce beard and mustache. According to those who heard him, it is said that he "preached with fervor and held his audience spellbound with his stories and illustrations of his message."

During his later days he had established residence on Honan Island, a suburb across the river from Canton City. In 1945, the house was still standing, occupied by a descendant of Leung's. It was, unfortunately, not kept up as a Christian home. The occupants showed that they had gone back to idol worship. There are still a few of the Leung clan professing Christians. Some years ago, the writer met a niece of whom Ah Faat, in his last days, was very fond. She was active in Christian work.

For the most part, Leung seems to have found a great deal of joy in his work. He was happy when he could get a crowd to listen to his message. But there were times of discouragement. Who doesn't have them? Dr. Hobson wrote in a letter:

> "Leung Ah Faat is out of spirits this morning, and said he had no heart to preach to the sick people. I (Dr. Hobson) took him aside and inquired the cause of his depression. He said his wife was sick, that the Chinese were very wicked, that Christians were not as united as they ought to be, etc. I spoke to him of how much the foreign missionaries had to

bear from the Chinese and yet they persisted in their work. If such were the feelings, wishes, and principles of foreigners, surely a Chinese preacher, especially an experienced man like the evangelist, should not lose heart in urging his countrymen to abandon their idols and worship the true God. Then I reminded him of how much provocation, insult and contempt our Saviour endured. This conversation had a good effect. The old man was nerved to renewed effort and spoke better and more earnestly to the patients than I remember to have heard him before."

THE TAI PING REBELLION

A Christian tract became an explosive bomb in the hands of a madman. Leung Ah Faat was, of course, innocent of any intention to reform China by force. His was the method of winning her through the Love of God and His Christ. But one of his tracts fell into the hand of an aspirant to a degree at the tri-annual examination in Canton in 1833.

The tract contained a short explanation of the principles of the Christian doctrine, and it fell into the hands of a Mr. Hung Shiu Tsun. Mr. Hung took the tract home with him, put it away with his other books and forgot about it until one day, ten years later, his attention was called to it. As he read it, he became fascinated by its teaching, with the result that he organized a society which became known as the Sheung Tai Ooi--the Society of the Supreme Being. He gained many adherents, particularly in the province of Kwangsai.

This turned into a rebellion known as the "Taiping Rebellion", which, though it started out as a promising reform movement, deteriorated into a bizarre mixture of misinterpreted Christianity and native super-

stition. But, because the Chinese government was not able to cope with it, it became for 14 years a scourge in China, causing the death of some twenty million people, turning rice fields into jungles and towns and cities into shambles.

A case, where good intentions but lack of understanding of Christian principles, became the unwitting cause of disaster to the progress and teaching of Christianity and welfare of China as a nation. Mr. Leung Ah Faat, though the unwitting cause, took no part in it, as far as is known. He was busy with the production of literature and personal evangelism. The seed sown was good. An enemy sowed tares among the good seed.

TRACT DISTRIBUTION

One might well ask, was all the effort and expense of writing, printing, and distribution of tracts effective? Yes, there is plenty of evidence that it was an effective way to make the Gospel known to the Chinese. The Chinese appreciate learning and culture. Although they seemed at the time to be loath to accept anything from a foreign source, yet such is man's eternal quest for new things that they forget the source for the joy of finding what appealed to them--THE TRUTH. One might cite many incidents of how a single tract was as seed sown that fell into the rich soil. Here is one:

> There was a gatekeeper at Dr. Hobson's Hospital, who, through reading some of Leung's tracts, became an ardent Christian. He was in the habit of conversing with the people who came through the gate to the Hospital and always had a tract ready to hand them. There came to the hospital a Mr. Chou for treatment. He was a literary man. The gatekeeper gave him a tract which

was widely used, written by Mr. Milne, called: "Conversation Between Two Friends". Mr. Chou became an interested inquirer through reading this tract and came back for more information which led, through friendship with Leung Ah Faat, who introduced him to Dr. Hobson, to his doing some writing and drawing of illustrations for a book on Physiology that Dr. Hobson was translating into Chinese. Mr. Chou became a regular attendant at services held in the hospital by Leung who had become the hospital evangelist. There came a day when Mr. Chou asked for baptism. He made rapid progress in his knowledge of Christianity and soon was asked to help in preaching as Leung's hard life and age were affecting his health and he had to curtail his activities.

It is interesting to note that this Mr. Chou later entered the service of the English Wesleyan Mission where he became one of the leading preachers and assisted in the training of other evangelists for 45 years.

Leung's Last Days

The death of Leung's wife, whom he had brought to the faith and himself had baptized, who stayed by him and supported him in all his efforts by her prayers and faithful witness, was a great blow to him. The date of her death was 1849, probably less than sixty years of age. Leung himself was about sixty at the time. Dr. Hobson wrote of her as "a quiet good woman".

Leung married again, having been urged by his friends to do so. He did not find the right woman and the union did not last. It must have been a decided misfit because marriage contracts were not easily broken in those days. Leung's friends pressed on him to get another woman to care for him and his home. There are hints of scandal connected with Leung's doings but, according to Dr. Hobson, he was exonerated completely, but not without having had a bad effect on the lives and character of some of the Christians.

The last of Leung's letters extant is dated July 15, 1852. In it he writes of the fellowship he had with Dr. Hobson and, of course, he would never forget Dr. Milne who had brought him to the faith, and Dr. Morrison who had been responsible for his coming into contact with him. He also, in true characteristically Chinese fashion, as well as Christian humility, bemoans the fact of the fruitlessness of his labors. He pleaded with the Mission for more laborers. He added an injunction: "Send out young men whose tongues have not become stiff."

There is a record in a London newspaper (1854) of an Englishman having visited the hospital in Canton. It says:

"The patients were mustering early in the Chapel seats, which by the hour of eleven were well nigh filled, and places appropriated to those connected with the hospital were occupied. At that hour, the aged evangelist, Leung Ah Faat, walked to the preacher's seat. The order of service was similar to that of Congregational churches at home, but the aged man followed the custom of his country's sages and sat to teach. On this occasion he expounded closely and vigorously St. Paul's address to the Athenians".

The reference to Leung's sitting down, while preaching, indicates perhaps that he had some physical ailment that caused him to do so rather than "custom of sages". At least, the evangelists who followed Leung in China did not follow this "custom".

Whatever his physical condition may have been, he was determined to spend his last breath in proclaiming the Gospel to his people. On his last Sunday before his demise, though weak in body, he crossed the river for services at the hospital. The record shows that his text was, "Be not afraid of them that kill the body. . . ." The following day again he was in his place at the hospital, but it was his last crossing. After service, he went home and to bed. In the evening he insisted on getting up for evening prayers in his home which resulted in a chill and fever. The following day he had to send word to Dr. Hobson that he was unable to come to the hospital. Doctors attended him but to no avail. The day after, early in the morning, the old warrior went to his reward. His last act, when given a cup of tea, he lifted it up and with uplifted eyes, as if in prayer, he triumphantly breathed his last. The date was July 12, 1855.

This ends the record of this intrepid Chinese Missionary of the Cross. By ordinary standards, a very ordinary man who, most likely, would have lived out the span of his existence unsung and unhonored, but for being enthused, in the fullest sense of the word (divinely inspired). Never can it be more truly said of a person that his works live after him than of the Reverend Leung Ah Faat. He well deserves the additional name, "Kung", "Grandfather", by which he was known to his grandchildren and the second generation of those near him. So we may end by calling him Leung Kung Faat.

I have heard hundreds of Chinese preachers refer to him as their "hero of the faith", and example of devotion to a great cause. He is the first of a long line of heroes who have "in season and out of season" preached the word of TRUTH as they have learned and adapted it to the needs of the day in which they lived.

Today, under Communist rule, their tongues may be bridled, but I cannot but believe that the lives of the men and women, who I have seen tried and tested, are in some way still bearing witness, though under adverse conditions, to the redeeming Love of God in Christ Jesus their Lord and ours.

(End)